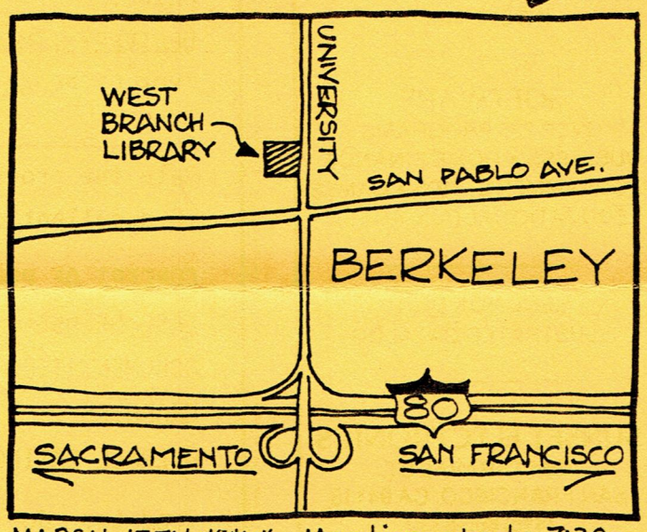
BAZUG

MARCH
V:2, N:3

BAY AREA ZX80/81, TS 1000/2000 USERS

NEXT MEETING

THURS.



MARCH 17TH *** Meeting starts 7:30pm
West Branch Berkeley Library

ZX COMPUTING
Low Cost Microdrive for Spectrum ZX81--soon?

ZX Computing which bills itself as "Britain's Biggest Magazine for the Sinclair User" is now available at Delauers News Agency in Oakland. It comes out bimonthly and Delauers gets its British computer magazine the same time of month as the BAZUG meetings. The Feb/Mar 1983 issue was available February 17 so look for the next issue in April. The cost is $5.50 which is steep but is less than it would cost with an airmail subscription. The magazine is quite good - lots of programs, hard- and software review and ads for Spectrum and ZX81 utilities.

I was most interested in a report on a press conference given by Nigel Searle of Sinclair Research. The Sinclair Microdrives should be released the first quarter of 1983. Delay in its introduction was due to design alterations and they will be using a new material for the recording medium that has not been used before in computers. The Sinclair ads show a picture of the microdrive and state they will be around 50. The ZX microdrive is designed for the Spectrum (and hopefully the TS2000). However, Cobra Technology Ltd. has an ad announcing a ZX81 Microdrive Interface that they will be developing soon. With some luck we will soon see a practical solution to the "7 minute blues." Does anyone have any idea if ordering a microdrive from Great Britain will present the same difficulties as ordering the Spectrum direct has had?

Mr. Searle also hinted at the ZX83. This is a machine which will be "quite different from any other on the market" and "create a new segment of the market."

* * * * * * * * *

Will the TS 2000 make the ZX81 and TS 1000 absolete? Personal Computer World reports the ZX81 outsold the Spectrum in 1982 (220,000 vs 100,000). There is still a lot of ZX81 software and support hardware produced in Britain.

TIMEX has just reduced its price on the TS 1000 to $69.95 and has extended its $15 rebate until April 30 (I think... check with me at the meeting). That makes the actual price $54.95 for a machine many of us paid $150 for, minus 1K of memory.

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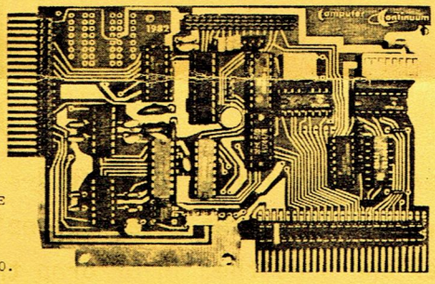

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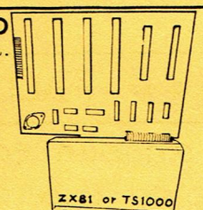

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SINCLAIR/TIMEX SOFTWARE REVIEW

TITLE: _____

COMPANY/AUTHOR: _____

DISTRIBUTOR: _____

PRICE: _____

DELIVERY TIME (MAIL ORDER): _____

TYPE OF PROGRAM (GAME, BUSINESS APPLICATION, ETC:

_____

Rate the program on a 1 to 10 scale (1-awful; 5-competent; 10-excellent):

CONCEPT OF PROGRAM ____ ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

EASE OF USE ____ _____

DOCUMENTATION ____ _____

GRAPHICS ____ _____

OVERALL RATING ____ _____

Send to: Joel Brody, 3934 Whittle Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602

ZX81/TS1000 SOFTWARE RATING

Manufacturer/ Program	Number of replies	Program Concept	Present-ation	Document-ation	Graphics Quality	Overall Rating
Aardvark						
MARS	1	7	5	7	-	6
Inter Computer						
AIR ATTACK	1	5	1	1	5	2
SoftSync						
MAZOGS	2	7	9	9	10	8
Sinclair Research						
VU-CALC	2	8	7	7	-	7
VU-FILE	1	8	7	7	-	7
Timex						
SUPERMATH	1	2	4	4	1	2

Replies have begun to trickle in so here is our first T/S software ratings chart. We hope to have a much larger list, so fill in the attached reply form or jot down your ratings on a piece of paper and send them in or drop them off at the meeting.

TIMEX-SINCLAIR FAIRE *** FALL OF 1983 ***

Organizational meetings will be announced next meeting (MAR. 17). IF you are interested, have ideas or experience, contact Rick Link or Joel Brody. The current picture puts the Faire at Fort Mason after the TS2000, TS1500 and Sinclair micro drives are available with local business and software interests in attendance. R. Link

SOFTWARE REVIEW

Name: Mars
Type: Adventure Game
Manufacturer: Aardvark

I AM IN SPACESHIP CONTROL
I SEE:

* TEXTBOOK
* BUTTON-PUSH
* CONTROL PANEL
* VIEWPORT

OBVIOUS EXITS ARE:
DOWN
TELL ME WHAT TO DO.

This is what you see on the screen after you load Mars. It is also about all you know about the game except you are a stranded astronaut on Mars who has to find a way to escape the planet. Mars is an "adventure game" that just uses words. There is no fast action or blazing lasers. You enter 2 word commands (such as GO DOWN) to stimulate action. The major challenge is to discover what the commands are and then how to use them. Aardvark claims to specialize in adventure games and considers Mars its introductory game. They estimate the playint time to solve the game as 30 to 50 hours. This is about what it took me. The game is saveable in midplay.

The game might sound a bit dull to those used to the flash and speed of video games. However, good adventure games make use of the ROM and RAM between your ears for their graphics and special effects. When I think back to "Mars" I don't think of words on a screen, but I conjure up the scene of a pulp science fiction adventure. The concept of the adventure game is one of the exciting software applications of computing. The product is an interactive novel that holds the potential to develop into a new form of literature.

I can definitely recommend Mars, but it has some weaknesses. I played the game over a period of a 1½ months before I solved it. The beginning and end parts of my play were quite exciting, but the middle did drag a bit. I can't really go into detail without giving out clues. The general game concept of the game is good. Perhaps its as good an adventure game available for the T/S, but I have seen some much better ones from Apple. The biggest flaw in Mars is sloppy programming. Aardvard markets its games for other computers and its T/S games are adaptions that aren't always properly play-tested. There were some program and spelling errors that disturbed me mid-game since when I was stuck on a game problem I feared the game had errors that prevented its completion However, the game is playable to completion.

Mars and other Aardvark games are available from Sunset Electronics and bi mail order (see SYNC). I'll be happy to demonstrate the game at the next meeting.

Joel Brody

Note: Mars has one semi-major bug that can make a solution difficult. Ask me about it if you want to try the game.

SINCLAIR RESEARCH UPDATE

Did you feel out one of those questionnaires from Sinclair? Have you received anything in the mail that looks like a poster? Well...I got mine in the mail yesterday (March 11) and after reading it over (yes, it's more of a pamphlet than a poster), it looks like a very useful reference guide that should have been included with the ZX81 in the first place. The following is a list of the contents:

- graphics and codes
- basic statements/descriptions
- basic commands/descriptions
- basic functions/descriptions
- derived functions
- special characters and operators
- screen layout (line coordinates)
- character codes (hex and decimal)
- selective ROM calls
- how to use FOR...NEXT
- how to use IF...THEN
- error codes
- memory map
- timing chart
- math instructions
- store register-into-memory and load register instructions
- move memory-to-memory instructions
- plus much much more...

Editor

Anyone who wants to explain what half of the chart means – see me at the next meeting.

SAN FRANCISCO SINCLAIR USERS' GROUP

Fred Hall and Terry Meade are trying to form a users group at the Presidio of San Francisco. Initial meetings will be "Get Acquainted" sessions with Fred demonstrating his ZX81 and TS1000 programs for using the IO Expansion board and A/D-DA capability of Eric Reiter of Computer Continuum. Eric will be prevailed upon to be available to demonstrate his ribbon connector system for curing add-on memory wobbles, and his VHF converter for clearing up and sharpening CRT images.

A name collecting and exploratory meeting will be held at the Presidio at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 29. Enter the Presidio from any of the entrances and proceed to the Presidio Recreation Center, Bldg #1337 (former Officer's Club) in the Fort Scott area of the Presidio off of Harrison Ave. Call Fred Hall at (415) 221-4790 for more information.

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R U M O R S and T R U T H S
from the Editor's desk

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On Sunday, March 6, the new TIMEX 2040 printer went on sale at Macy's Manhattan Store in New York for $99. Macy's will accept phone orders on your Macy's credit card. Call (212) 971-6000 first to find out what information Macy's mail order department needs from the NYC store. The NYC store's number is (212) 695-4400 and ask for the video games department.

Surprise! A Vistor from Boston
Sinclair Research USA

WANT TO SEE A SPECTRUM? Thanks to the generosity of the South Bay group, BESS ELLIOTT's offer to demonstrate a real live SPECTRUM while visiting San Francisco for the West Coast Computer Faire was passed on to BAZUG because our group meets the day before the faire starts. Ms. Elliott is from Sinclair Research USA in Boston. She will be showing a spectrum, not the 2000 from Timex although internal components are supposed to be similar. She will arrive the same day as the meeting and her talk will include (hopefully) information about the structure of some of Boston's Computer User clubs. SEE YOU ON THE 17TH!

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We are a non-profit newsletter serving Timex/Sinclair users in the San Francisco - Oakland Bay Area.

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- contributors

Please send all questions, adv., articles by the first of the month to: Bazug
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